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British travel writer to share thoughts on South Dakota at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota was the exotic destination of one British travel writer, and he's coming to the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre to discuss his book about the visits.

Fraser Harrison, author of *Infinite West: Travels in South Dakota*, will share his thoughts, observations and musings during a talk and signing beginning at noon CST on Monday, Sept. 24. Everyone is welcome to attend and bring a lunch.

"This is an opportunity to discover what someone from outside of South Dakota has observed about the state we call home," said Nancy Tystad Koupal, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society Press, which published the book.

The SDSHS Press and the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society, are sponsoring the event.

Harrison lives in Suffolk (SUFF-uk), England. He is the author of nine books and has written about travel for *The Sunday Times* of London. Harrison first set foot in South Dakota in 1992 and he was captivated by the landscape that epitomized the Wild West to him.

"I would describe my book as an irreverent homage to South Dakota. ... I have been visiting the state two decades, and during that time the place has roused mixed feelings in me, but my desire to return has never waned," Harrison said.

The book contains essays about six subjects that Harrison considers essential to understanding South Dakota. They are: the Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Deadwood, the site of the Wounded Knee massacre, his namesake town of Harrison (southwest of Mitchell), and the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

"My book contains more opinions about South Dakota than descriptions or traveler's tales, and I hope that readers will take some of these opinions from the book, if only to disagree with them," Harrison said.

The main duty of the book is to entertain, he said.

Infinite West is also the October selection for the History and Heritage Book Club. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 10, at the Cultural Heritage Center. Martyn Beeny, an Englishman who lives in Pierre and is the marketing director for the

SDSHS Press, will lead the discussion. The book club is sponsored by the Foundation and SDSHS Press.

Infinite West is available at the Heritage Store at the Cultural Heritage Center. It sells for \$17.95, but SDSHS and History and Heritage Book Club members receive a discount when they purchase the book in the Heritage Store.

For more information about the book signing or the History and Heritage Book Club, call (605) 773-6006.

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The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota's history and heritage for future generations.

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.